

The Importance of Connection

Dr. Nancy Chavkin

A Message from the Director

Thank you all who attended our 14th Annual Federal Region VI Title IV-E Roundtable in early June (more than 120 of you). We had so many wonderful presentations, speakers, and opportunities to network together. One of the highlights was our keynote by Carmen Nazario, the national Assistant Secretary for Children and Families. She acknowledged all of the hard work being done in the regions and encouraged us to send our requests up the chain to Washington for help in addressing some of the roadblocks we encounter. Her address to us was among the last public appearances Ms.

Nazario made in her national post as she resigned later in July in order to return to Puerto Rico and care for her husband, who suffers from Alzheimer's. We are grateful to her for taking the time to visit with us and wish her well in the coming months as she focuses on family care.

If you weren't able to make it to Roundtable this year, visit our [Web site](#) for our wrap-up report, focus group report-backs, selected PowerPoint presentations, and photos.

Speaking of Web sites, there's one more I'd like to call to your attention. It's a section of the Texas [Department of Family and Protective Services site](#)



that provides details on a program to provide hiring preference to foster youth below the age of 25 for jobs with state agencies. Youth who are in care on their 18th birthday are eligible for the program and can obtain a proof of qualification letter through their PAL representatives.

Finally, congratulations to our Title IV-E summer grads and welcome to our fall students.

Legislators Need Your Input

Texas lawmakers, who meet every other year in our state, will convene in January for the 82nd Legislature. Predictions are that Texas will face a several billion-dollar shortfall that will result in a number of cut-backs across many programs. There is little doubt that social services programs, among them child welfare, will be under the legislative microscope during this session.

Interim committees have already been formed for pre-legislature discussions. Some have closed sessions, but many are open to the public. And even if a session is closed, you can still provide your input via the Web or by calling a committee member. The opinions of social workers count with state legislators.

You are on the front lines and know first-hand the impact a

budget cut to an important program is likely to have. Give your legislators the benefit of your experience by attending committee meetings. You can also utilize the Web by going to the [Texas Legislature Web site](#) to track bills and provide your input.



*Whatever affects
one directly, affects
all indirectly. I can
never be what I
ought to be until
you are what you
ought to be. This is
the interrelated
structure of reality.
—Martin Luther
King, Jr.*

Starting Out and Finishing Up

This past summer Kyla Morales (top right) signed her Title IV-E contract as a BSW stipend student and graduated at the end of the summer (bottom left). She finished her training and is now working as a Conservatorship Caseworker in Williamson County. Two Region 7 DFPS employees also began their MSW studies this summer (middle photo on right, from left): Conservatorship Caseworker Lurene Tapia

and Conservatorship Supervisor Christin Ivey.

Two Region 8 BSW stipend-students also graduated this summer (photos below, left to right): Mary Sauseda and Jose Augillon.

Congratulations to our BSW graduates as they launch their careers and a hearty welcome to our DFPS employees as they juggle the challenges of work and school on the road to an MSW degree.



Region 8 DFPS Employees Hit the Books

Flanked by the Center for Children and Families' Michele Bauman (L) and Dr. Nancy Chavkin, the following Region 8 Department of Family and Protective Services employees attended the orientation for new MSW students this August (from left): Ysenia Moreno, Rachel Lipsey, Dawn Ramirez, Ermelinda de la Cruz (guest), Zelma Wade, Sheryl Keeton (guest), and Felicia Penn.

We wish these hard-working employees success in their new educational venture, which will no doubt be both challenging and rewarding.



IV-E Spotlight: Judith Foster, BSW, Dec. 2006



*CPS Conservatorship Caseworker
Intensive Reunification Specialist*

The stipend program allowed me to do a full-time internship while gaining valuable experience. I was working and going to school prior to my last semester and was unsure how I would complete a full-time internship and still be able to pay my bills. The stipend program provided me with some additional funds and I was able to see what working for CPS would be like and gain a better understanding

of field work.

I am grateful I had the opportunity to participate in the program. Although my job can be very challenging and demanding, I feel that I am where I need to be on my career path.

If someone asked me about participating in the Title IV-E program, I would tell them to go for it. The eight-month commitment goes by so fast, and it's the best way to know if this type of field work is right for you.

It was right for me.

"If someone asked me about participating in the Title IV-E program, I would tell them to go for it! The eight-month commitment goes by so fast, and it is the best way to know if this type of field work is right for you."

—Judith Foster

Jason Robbins, BSW, Aug. 2007

CPS Conservatorship Caseworker

I found the transition into working was a great deal less stressful than some of my cohorts; I heard them talk of their struggles to find a job and gain employment after graduation.

I would recommend the Title IV-E stipend to someone who is interested in a career in child welfare.

It's a valuable experience.



CCF Welcomes Graduate Assistants

The Center for Children and Families is pleased to welcome two new MSW graduate assistants this semester. Brittany Gold (left) hails from Alice, Texas, and did her undergraduate work at Texas State in Family and Child Development. She'll be providing program evals for Title IV-E projects. Alyssa Taylor is a native of Tennessee, but now lives in New Braunfels. She also majored in Family and Child

Development as an undergrad. Alyssa will support the Caminitos project, a parent-involvement program for Hernandez Elementary in San Marcos.

Both Brittany and Alyssa are interested in animal-assisted therapy with children, including dogs (Brittany) and horses (Alyssa).





The Center for Children and Families is located at Swinney House on the Texas State University-San Marcos campus.

Child Welfare Educator Resources

Be sure to visit the [Child Welfare Information Gateway Web site](#) to check out the rich pool of resources for educators, including the Educators' Toolkit, a collection of enhancement tools for university curricula. Recently added are fact sheets on how federal legislation impacts service delivery for Child Welfare. In development is a collection

of self-directed training modules that will include insights drawn from best practices for parent-child visits and other topics.

The Child Welfare Information Gateway is a service

of the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families' Children's Bureau. Resources are updated regularly, so check back often.



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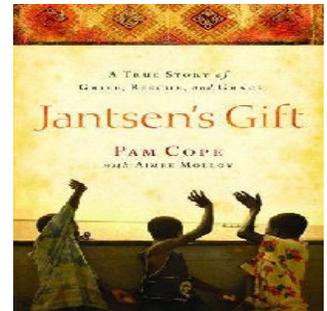
Pam Cope lives contently in a small town in Missouri; she has never traveled to another country nor does she have the desire to travel away from her home.

Pam's life gets turned upside down when her 15-year-old son unexpectedly dies from an undiagnosed heart defect. Suddenly needing to get away, Pam goes to Viet Nam with a friend.

After being in that faraway country for a while, Pam realizes she wants to change the world and help children. Pam and her husband now have adopted two children from Viet Nam and have created a foundation called Touch A Life.

Pam's journey from losing a loved one to being an inspiration to others is remarkably recounted.

For more info on the foundation please visit the organization's [Web site](#).



NASW Houston, CSWE Portland

Mark your calendars for two events in October that will include child welfare and Title IV-E presentations. The first is the annual Texas gathering of the National Association of Social Workers, in Houston this year, Oct. 8-10.

On the first day of the NASW conference, you might want to consider attending the session at 2:15 pm titled CPS and Child Abuse Prevention: Pre-

paring Social Workers for Budget Cuts and New Reform Proposals in the 82nd Legislative Session. Part of the Child, Family & Schools and Ethics tracks, this session is sure to be packed with useful information for navigating the tough times ahead and also for lending your voice to the legislative process.

The Title IV-E Child Welfare Track 4 meetings at the Council on Social Work Education

conference in Portland this year will meet Oct. 14, from 9 am to 4:15 pm. The work group utilized Survey Monkey to incorporate comments from last year's attendees to develop about 11 topics to be addressed in two sessions at this year's meeting.

